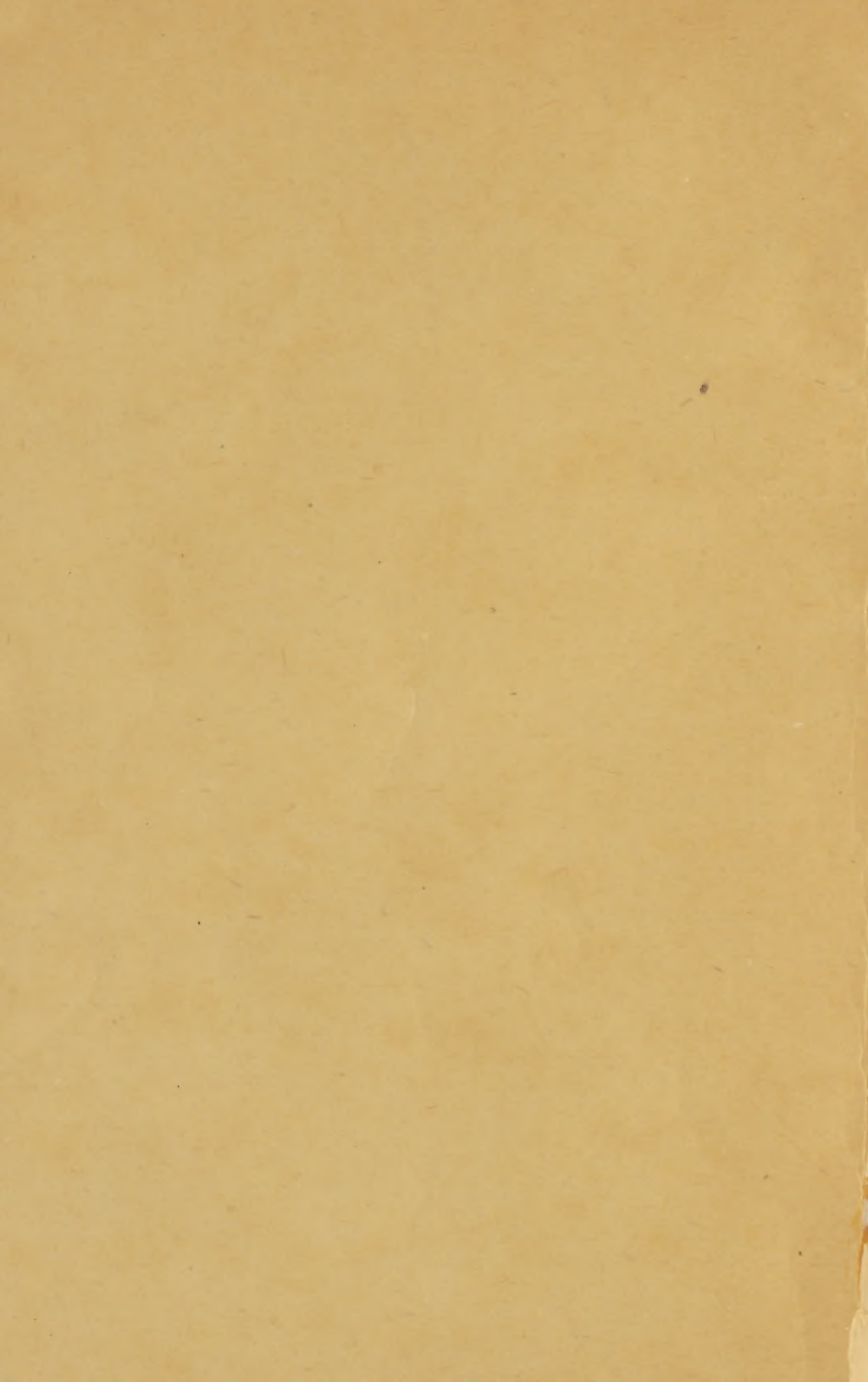


Early literature  
of tobacco —

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from: Overland Month,  
San Francisco  
1869, III

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EARLY LITERATURE OF TOBACCO.

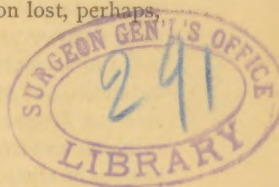
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tillery were sent back over the river. The unemployed part of our command was quartered in a church, and most of the officers in a law-office near it. Toward morning the recrossing of the infantry began. In a drizzle of rain and a dismal mist we stood in silent, wakeful ranks along the streets, from four o'clock till seven; then we fell back, street by street, forming our lines of battle on each. As the picket-line withdrew, the Rebel skirmishers advanced. The withdrawal was accomplished—as the battle

had begun—with skirmish-firing in the streets.

Through the infinite mud of the landing we floundered to the one remaining pontoon-bridge, and by ten o'clock were on the north bank of the Rappahannock. Then the skirmish-line recrossed, the engineers removed the bridge—and the Rebels again held the town.

At great sacrifice of life and prestige, the North accomplished only another failure; but the Rebellion lost, perhaps, its greatest opportunity.



#### EARLY LITERATURE OF TOBACCO.

MR. PARTON, in his *brochure* entitled "Does it Pay to Smoke?" declares that the cigar and pipe have become more alluring of late years, because they have "got into literature." He refers to a passage from *Jane Eyre*, that "is enough to make any old smoker feel for his cigar-case." He confesses, too, that "Byron, Thackeray, and many other popular authors have written passages in which the smoke of tobacco insinuates itself most agreeably into the reader's gentle senses." This is, of course, all true in regard to what it asserts, but far from true in what it implies. We confess that a cigar or pipe does not receive much additional charm from the allusions to it in earlier literature; but such passages are so frequent, and begin so far back, that it is evident tobacco "got into literature" as soon as it was received into any nation having a written language. That they belong rather to the curiosities than to the beauties of literature, is undoubtedly owing to the fact that the best writings of the times were scholarly or ideal. Philosophy and the higher drama gave dignified employment to genius. Ro-

mances were filled with fabulous adventures, in which dragons, griffins, and unicorns, rather than the living men of the times, played conspicuous parts. It was left to later years, for the most part, to develop a taste that should be less artificial, by discovering the pathos and poetry of common life.

But in such writers as did deal with the events of the days in which they lived, there are early and constantly recurring allusions to the use of the fragrant weed. In broadsides, pamphlets, and chap-books of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, we have all the *pros* and *cons* of the subject; as well intentioned praise and bitter denunciation, as in the more graceful praises and more elaborate attacks of the present years.

One of the earliest references to the new fashion is found in Taylor, the Waterman, whose lack of trade drove him into selling ale and writing poetry. His opinion of *all* innovations is that of one whose "occupation's gone;" and his opinion of tobacco is, that "the Devil brought it to England in a coach." The Anti-Tobacco Society of Massachusetts



will rejoice in this partial confirmation of their theory, that

"'Twas the Devil sowed the seed."

As the introduction of coaches brought poverty to the bargemen of the Thames, it is hardly to be wondered at that they became enemies to whatever new luxuries appeared at the same time.

Perhaps the first literary effusion wholly devoted to the "Nicotian weed" is Nash's *Lenten Stufte*, an octavo tract, of date anterior to A.D. 1600. It is dedicated to Humphrey King, a London tobaccoist and poor pamphleteer. Nash was an inveterate Bohemian, and, as might be expected, is extravagant in his praises of what Spenser also calls "divine tobacco." This was quickly followed by a larger and better work, in mock-heroic verse, entitled *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco*, and dedicated to Drayton. Although published anonymously, the authorship is generally ascribed to Sir John Beaumont. It has recently been reprinted in England, but there are probably no copies of it in this country.

*Look to it, for Ile (I'll) Stabbe Ye*, is the title of a sixty-four-paged quarto, published in London about A.D. 1604, written by Samuel Rowlands. The merit and tenor of the whole may be fairly judged by the "Introductory Sonnett," which begins as follows:

"There is a humour us'd of late  
By ev'ry rascall swagg'ring mate  
To give the Stabbe: Ile stabbe (says hee)  
Him that dares take the wall of me.  
If you to pledge his health denie,  
Out comes his poniard—there you lie.  
If his Tobacco you dispraise,  
He sweares a stabbe shall end your daies."

The author then makes at all classes, dagger in hand. In a smaller quarto, published a few years later, by the same author, entitled *A Whole Crew of Kind Gossips, all Met to be Merry*, the manners of the times are coarsely satirized by the imaginary criminations and re-

criminations between six husbands and their wives. "Good tobacco, sweet and strong," is spoken of as one of the allurements to houses of questionable repute. Perhaps this adds an emphasis to the complaint of one of the Merry Gossips, that her husband always smelt of tobacco.

*Laugh and Lie Downe, or the Worlde's Folly*, is a black-letter quarto, of A.D. 1605, London. This little book describes the characters in an imagined Purgatory of Wit, or Fort of Folly. There is a neat bit of writing in it, descriptive of a fop of the day, showing how indispensable the pipe had become to complete the outfit of a "man of fashion:"

"The next was a nimble-witted and glib-tongued fellow, who, having in his youth spent his wits in the Arte of Love, was now become the jest of wit; for his looks were so demure, his words so in print, his graces so in order, and his conceits so in tune, that he was—yea, iwis (I wis) so was he, such a gentleman for a jester, that the Lady Folly could never be better fitted for her entertainment of all strangers. The pick-tooth in the mouth, the flower in the eare, the kisse of the hand, the stoupe of the head, the leer of the eye, and what not that was unneedful, but he had so perfecte at his fingers endes, that every she was my Faire Ladye, and scarce a Knight but was Noble Sir: the tobacco pipe was at hand, when Trinidado was not forgotten—why all things so well agreed together that at this square table of people, or table of square people, this man, *made by rule*, could not be spared for a great somme."

Trinidado was the name given to a favorite brand of tobacco, and "square people" means here, not what it would in modern slang, but simply *block-heads*.

In *The Gul's Horne Book*, (the Greenhorn's Hand-Book) a well known pamphlet of Decker, London, A.D. 1609—made up of satirical advice as to proper

city behavior—it is declared, that at the table of the inn,

“Before the meate comes smoaking to the boarde, our Gallant must draw out his tobacco box, the ladle for the cold snuff into his nostrill, the tongs and the priming iron. All this artillery may be of gold or silver, if he can reach to the price of it; it will be a reasonable useful pawn at all times when the current of his money falles out to runne low. And here you must observe to know in what state tobacco is in town, better than the merchants, and to discourse of the potecaries where it is to be sold as readily as the potecary himselfe.”

We see it hinted in this that the new luxury was then, as again now, an expensive one. In the comedy called *The Sun's Darling*—published about the same time as the above—a dandified gallant is spoken of as “some alderman's son—one that blows away his patrimony in feathers and tobacco.” No later than A.D. 1620 England, according to Sir Edwin Sandys, was importing from Spain £120,000 worth of tobacco, yearly. Remembering the change in money values, we can see that even its moderate use will necessitate no inconsiderable outlay. There were three favorite brands: called Trinidado, Leaf, and Pudding tobacco. The first came in rolls, or coils; the last was probably cut, or chopped. The pipe does not appear to have been of expensive materials. Bishop Bonner, who may be supposed to have used as good pipes as any of his day, died in 1596 at the Golden Lion, Fulham, while sitting in his chair, smoking. This inn was built in the time of Henry VII. When it was pulled down in 1836 an ancient pipe of quaint pattern, in brass, was found behind the wainscot of the room in which the Bishop died. The inn was a resort, in the sixteenth century, of the most prominent men of the day. The discov-

ery of the pipe called forth much grave discussion as to its probable owner; and then I believe it was carefully laid away in some museum as the “Bishop's own.” But the “artillery” for snuff-making and taking, was more costly. There was a box to carry the root in, a rasp to reduce it to powder, and sometimes a spoon to carry it to the nostril. An improvement was, to put the rasp on the back of the snuff-box. There are several of these earliest snuff-rasps, preserved in the Hôtel Cluny, Paris. They are made of ivory and inlaid wood.

From Ben Jonson's comedy of *The Alchemyst*, we find that sellers soon learned to adulterate and to impart false flavors to their wares. “Captain Face,” one of the characters in the play, commends “Druggier,” the apothecary, in these words:

“This is my friend Abel, an honest fellow.  
He lets me have good tobacco; he does not  
Sophisticate it with slack lees, or oil,  
Nor washes it with muscadell or grannis,  
Nor buries it in gravel underground,  
Wrapp'd up in greasy leather or old clouts,  
But keeps it in fine lily pots, that, opened,  
Smell like conserves of roses.”

From Heath's *Two Centuries of Epigrammes*—a book of lean poetry and leaner wit, edited by a Fellow of New College and published at Oxford A.D. 1610—we see that collegians soon became familiar with the use of the leaf. The 92d Epigram reads:

“We buy the driest wood that we can finde,  
And willingly would leave the smoke behinde;  
But in tobacco a thwart course we take,  
Buying the heart only for the smoke's sake.”

*The Curtain Drawer of the World*, (London, 4to, 35 leaves, A.D. 1612) is a tedious tirade against the morals and manners of the times, unenlivened by any flashes of wit. Tobacco, of course, could not escape him, though what he says is confused, and his words are smoky. Nevertheless, it is shown how fashionable the custom must have been, since he attacks it in the persons of noblemen:



"Then (*i. e.*, in times past) noblemen's chimneys used to smoake, and not their noses; Englishmen without were not Blackmoores within, for then Tobacco was an Indian, unpicked and unpiped—now made the common ivy-bush of luxury, the curtaine of dishonesty, the proclaimer of vanity, the drunken colourer of Drabby salacy."

I have no doubt that this is severe enough for one of Mr. Trask's tracts, if one only knew what it meant.

*Techno-gamia, or the Marriage of the Arts*—a comedy by Holiday, A. D. 1618—takes up the praises of the weed in this boisterous manner:

"Tobacco's a Musician,  
And in a pipe delighteth;  
It descends in a close,  
Through the organs of the nose,  
With a relish that inviteth.

*Chorus:*

This makes me sing, soho, soho boyes,  
Ho boyes sound I loudly,  
Earth ne'er did breed  
Such a jovial weed,  
Whereof to boast so proudly.

Tobacco is a Lawyer,  
His pipes do love long cases;  
When our braines it enters  
Our feet do make indentures,  
While we seal with stamping paces.

*Chorus.*

Tobacco is a Physician,  
Good both for sound and sickly;  
'Tis a hot perfume  
That expels cold rheume,  
And makes it flow down quickly.

*Chorus.*

Tobacco is a Traveller  
Come from the Indies hither;  
It passed sea and land  
Ere it came to my hand,  
And 'scaped the wind and weather.

*Chorus.*

Tobacco is a Criticke  
That still old paper turneth;  
Whose labor and care  
Is smoke in the aire,  
That ascends from a rag when it burneth.

*Chorus.*

Tobacco is an *ignis fatuus*,  
A fat and fyrie vapoure,  
That leads men about  
Till the fire be out,  
Consuming like a taper.

*Chorus.*

Tobacco is a Whyffler  
That cries 'Huff, Snuff,' with furie;  
His pipes, his club and linke;  
He's the wiser that does drinke:  
Thus armed I fear not a furie.

*Chorus."*

This song was an accompaniment to a dance, which gives opportunity for the puns in the second verse. "Whyffler" ("whiffler" in Shakspeare) was a herald who went in advance of stately processions, with trumpets, (pipes) clubs and links, (lanterns, fire) clearing the way with loud "furie."

To "drinke" tobacco, was synonymous with smoking of tobacco. This phrase is used in a much better poem of the year 1631. In the *Soules Solace, or Thirty and one Spiritual Emblems*, by Thos. Jenner, (8vo, 27 leaves) we have our old friend transferred from the stage to the pulpit. There is an illustration accompanying the original, of a gentleman sitting by a table, smoking. The words are:

"The Indian weed, withered quite,  
Greene at noone, cut down at night,  
Shows thy decay: all flesh is hay.  
Thus thinke, then drinke Tobacco.

The Pipe that is so lily-white,  
Shows thee to be a mortal wight,  
And even such, gone with a touch.  
Thus thinke, then drinke Tobacco.

And when the smoake ascends on high,  
Thinke thou beholdst the vanity  
Of worldly stuffe, gone with a puffe.  
Thus thinke, then drinke Tobacco.

And when the Pipe grows foul within,  
Thinke on thy soule, defil'd with sin,  
And then the fire it doth require.  
Thus thinke, then drinke Tobacco.

The ashes that are left behind,  
May serve to put thee still in mind,  
That unto dust return thou must.  
Thus thinke, and drinke Tobacco."

These quotations might be continued indefinitely, in prose or in verse. Its enemies called tobacco, in the words of George Wythers, "a thing of barbarism and shame." Its friends represented Vulcan resting by his forge, pipe in mouth, and envied by all the dwellers

on Olympus. It is now three hundred years since tobacco "got into literature;" and the discussion of it to-day is carried on pretty much as it was at first. Meanwhile—whether rightly or not—there was probably more tobacco raised and more used in this past year than in any other of the past three hundred.

The King issued a famous Broadside against it, about A.D. 1603; but the smoke of his attack was answered by a smoke more fragrant, as also more abundant. We know that in A.D. 1600–1602 Bucklesbury, London, was famous for its shops of "simples," (*Merry Wives of Windsor*, act iii, sc. 3) but by 1617 most of the herb shops were converted into tobacconists' shops. "If I walk in the streets," says a lady in the *Owl's Almanack*, (A.D. 1618) "and chance to come down Bucklesbury, oh! how the whole orbe of air is infected with this fume." But even this protest was unheeded, as we believe the protests of several ladies have been since; and the "fume" in London extends now from Marylebone to Lambeth.

John Hotten, 74 and 75 Piccadilly, London, has recently published a *Smoker's Text-Book*, giving all the best things that have been said about the plant by its admirers. We have not seen the book, nor should we greatly value it. But there is a chance for some aspiring genius to give us a literary history of the whole subject. Let him begin with the

time "when noses were first made chimneys with smoking men's faces as if they were bacon," and bring it down to the present. He will carry us through the social life of the last three centuries. He will show us Sir Walter Raleigh and his *coterie* of friends. We will see many social gatherings of Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Condell, and their companions. And then the smaller fry—Nash, Decker, Wythers, Rowlands, and their fellow-pamphleteers of A.D. 1590 to 1630. We shall see "young Rogers" at the play, sitting upon the stage the better to display the pipe

"For which he pawned hath his riding cloke."

Nor shall we lack right royal company, for he will not fail to take us up Great Tower Street, to the inn where Peter the Great used to smoke his pipe after the day's labor, in London, was done. We will follow him most gladly into the smoky little room of the "Salutation and Cat," where, night after night, Lamb and Coleridge lovingly discussed poetry, art, metaphysics, and theology; and we will sit down quietly to an after-dinner cigar with Thackeray in the Café de Foy, and with him silently watch the rising of the moon over the tiles of the Rue Louis le Grand. Who will write us the book? Here is an open door to Fame; and as to Fortune, we put ourselves down for one (complimentary) copy, doubting not that thousands will be ready to follow our example.





